



9777 GOLF LINKS ROAD
OAKLAND • CA • 94605

T (510) 632-9525
F (510) 635-5719

EAST BAY ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
A non-profit organization

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ROBIN B. REYNOLDS
President

STEVEN E. KANE
Vice President

WILLIAM L. MARCHANT
Secretary

JAMES C. JOHNSTON
Treasurer

JOEL J. PARROTT, DVM
Executive Director

THOMAS J. BJORNSON
THOMAS P. BRITANIK
LEWIS E. BYRD
LAWRENCE S. CAHN
JOSEPH F. CONLEY
LAUNA M. CRAIG
LORI M. HAGEMAN, DVM
JONATHAN M. HARRIS
JOSEPH M. HESTER
JUSTIN HURD
PAUL JOHNSON
GREG KLEIN
ALISON McDONALD
SONJIA PARKER REDMOND, PHD
STEVEN SCHWIMMER
CHARLES H. SEAMAN
B. REID SETTLEMIER
FONG WAN
JOHN WOOLARD

FOUNDATION BOARD
SKIP RHODES
President

JOANN HARLEY
Vice President

STACEY BARSEMA
PETER BERNHARD
KENNETH R. BETTS
WARREN A. "CHIP" BROWN
GINNY L. HAIR
JASON M. KNIGHT
GREG LASSONDE, CFRE
CORNELL C. MAIER
JACK MCABOY
ROBERT L. MONTGOMERY
ELEANOR MOORE
GERALD D. OVERAA
JON Q. REYNOLDS
A. HORTON SHAPIRO
PHILLIP H. TAGAMI
MARY ELLEN TONG
JAMES A. VOHS
GEORGE A. ZIMMER

October 1, 2010

Kent Lewandowski
Jeremiah Dean
Sierra Club - Northern Alameda County Group
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite I
Berkeley, CA 94702

Dear Messrs. Lewandowski and Dean:

As long-time stewards of Knowland Park, we read with interest your recent *Yodeler* article "Zoo or Open Space? Protect Oakland's Largest Park." We are pleased to share with your members that the Zoo's proposed improvements to Knowland Park do not create a choice between the two. Rather, the project actually will allow the Zoo to better manage and continue to enhance the area's open space.

We appreciated the opportunity to share our vision for the project with the Northern Alameda County Chapter in June and welcome a chance to further engage your members to help clarify the Zoo's plans and the process we have undertaken with the City of Oakland to continue to protect and preserve Knowland Park.

We know that Northern California's precious biodiversity is one of the world's "hot spots" facing urgent need for protection. By realizing the vision of the California Trail Exhibit, the Oakland Zoo will enhance the 56-acre, 1998 City Council approved Zoo footprint in Knowland Park with 30+ acres of open space habitat and set the stage for approximately 20-acres of new exhibits. With an emphasis on science education and conservation of local species, the project has been thoughtfully designed to integrate native animals such as the grizzly bear, black bear, and jaguar, while providing opportunities to rehabilitate and reintroduce threatened or endangered species, like the California Condor and the Western Pond Turtle. Diverse native plant life and rich, local cultural history will add to the hillside vistas and park experience.

The California Trail Exhibit will preserve and protect Knowland Park by expanding the world of science education and conservation to residents of Oakland, the Greater Bay Area and beyond. The project will inspire the 600,000 people who come to the Zoo every year to learn about how to preserve and protect our environment within the unparalleled setting of Knowland Park.

Conservation and sustainability of California's ecosystems are an over-riding theme of the California Trail Exhibit, illustrating the changes in our state's flora and fauna. Community groups, local youth, and other volunteers will be invited into an exhibit dedicated to the removal of non-natives and the cultivation of native plants to restore and protect habitat. This fence-protected and non-developed "Ecological Recovery Zone" will be created, sustained and monitored by Zoo staff and volunteers, offering a hands-on conservation experience that encourages habitat for birds, pollinators, and other species.

www.oaklandzoo.org



AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION

© printed on recycled paper

Additionally, the California Trail Exhibit will offer holistic support of our conservation partnerships with wildlife organizations through skilled staff time, veterinary support in the field and on site, and, most importantly, by providing a public platform for outreach and education. These partnerships include:

- Sonoma State University to conserve **Western Pond Turtles** through their successful Headstart Program
- Ventana Wildlife Society to help the **California Condor** through veterinary support
- Felidae Conservation Fund's Bay Area Puma Project to study **Mountain Lion** behavior in the Santa Cruz Mountains
- Additional conservation efforts around the **Gray Wolf, Jaguar, Grizzly and Black Bears**

The proposed revisions to the California Trail Exhibit are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City of Oakland, as the lead agency, is conducting an exhaustive environmental review of the Zoo's proposed plan, including, among other topics, those mentioned in your story "air quality, traffic, watersheds, native plants and animals and ridgeline vistas." The City's environmental review, based on extensive expert studies, will include mitigation measures to ensure environmental protection at all levels. Additionally, the City's environmental review will be subject to public review as required by CEQA. The Zoo believes it has an environmentally and ecologically enhanced project today compared with its 1998 approval. For example, the previously approved loop road and passenger buses are proposed for replacement with an all-electric, quiet gondola transportation system requiring significantly reduced ground disturbance. The Zoo has held numerous public meetings to review our plan and we continue to welcome community input.

We believe the Zoo's goals for the California Trail Exhibit closely align with the Sierra Club's objective to "protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself." We invite your members to visit and learn more about the Zoo's proposed plans at www.itsyourzoo.org and join in the dialog of how we may work together to achieve our mutual objective for Oakland, the Bay Area and the planet. You also may contact Nik Haas-Dehejia, Director of Strategic Initiatives, directly at 510.632.9525 x138 or by email at communityinput@oaklandzoo.org.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joel J. Parrott
Executive Director
Oakland Zoo/East Bay Zoological Society

www.oaklandzoo.org


AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION

♻️ printed on recycled paper